

Yancey County Situational Update
October 04, 2024

Emergency services- We continue to appreciate the tremendous response from our local first responders and from our partners at the State and Federal level. Partner agencies on the ground in Yancey County include the Sheriff's Offices from Stanly, Catawba, Chatham, Alamance, and the North Carolina State Highway Patrol, as well as the North Carolina National Guard.

The Yancey County EMS Director continues to operate with 13 total units augmented by their ambulance strike team request. This staffing increase is a great help for any increased call volume as well as extended response/ transport times.

The Blue Ridge Regional Hospital is up and running on their own power. Unfortunately, due to county wide infrastructure damage there is no running water. The hospital is receiving water via tanker trucks with potable water. Due to this criticality it was determined by HCA Administration the hospital can only function as a stand-alone emergency room and no longer admit patients. If a patient needs to be admitted they will be transferred out to an appropriate facility. Patients currently in the hospital will be scheduled for discharge or transferred to an appropriate facility. There is a Disaster Medical Assistance Team (DMAT) field hospital operating in their parking lot to supplement any extra patients that arrive in order to not overwhelm the hospital.

There is a Field Hospital at the Burnsville Fire Department. There are Physicians, NP, Nurses and Paramedics that can treat patients or, if needed, an EMS strike team of additional ambulances and Paramedics that can transport patients to hospitals. If you come to the field hospital, the providers can see you and if needed write prescriptions for needed medications.

Cell phone towers- Still a work in progress, some of the tower sites are still in working order but access to maintain them and get them back up and running is difficult due to post storm conditions. Crews are actively clearing and improving roadways to these sites to allow access for essential crews.

Pod sites- We have one centralized Point of Distribution (POD) distributing water, MRE's, and ice located at Altec, 150 Altec Dr. Burnsville, NC 28714.

Shelter sites- We currently have two shelter sites open that are being managed and staffed by the American Red Cross. Those sites are located at Blue Ridge Elementary and Cane River Middle School.

Electric service- Electric service is beginning to come on in areas that are able to safely receive electricity. We remain thankful for our linemen and the tree crews for their tremendous effort while working under some of the most difficult conditions imaginable. Please keep in mind your generators as crews begin to restore power.

Ensure stand by generators are never connected directly to your house as you could end up back feeding into the grid around you and cause injuries to those working on the lines.

Generators should be connected to your home through a transfer switch to prevent injuries or fire. Due to areas being reenergized, often without notice, we urge you to treat all downed power lines as a live wire.

Water Treatment- Pumps and pipes are being sourced to arrive for Contractors to be ready when they begin the work of getting water to the water treatment plant. Preliminary sites have been identified to set new pumps and lay new lines and the feasibility of getting power to those areas is being assessed.

Public Works crews, with help from local contractors, have already begun making repairs to known breaks in the distribution system. As the plant is brought back on line, the system will have to be brought back online slowly and in phases as breaks are identified and repaired. Once reestablished, the water must be boiled until the system can be flushed and sanitized. The water will still be usable for showering and flushing toilets though.

We recommend turning off your water heater at the breaker until water is restored to prevent the heater from running dry and causing damage to the heater.

Port-a-Johns and shower trailers have been requested and are expected to be deployed around Town as soon as they arrive.

Waste water treatment- The plant is completely offline until major repairs can be completed. Engineers have been brought in to evaluate these issues and expedite repairs.

Volunteer donations- All donation drop-offs are being directed to Mountain Heritage High School at 333 Mountain Heritage HS Road Burnsville, NC 28714 between the times of 10a-6p as space allows. Currently we are at max capacity for clothing, we are unable to accept any more clothing at our drop off site and encourage you to forward those items to your local goodwill.

Comfort stations- Mobile laundry facilities are available in the GO Grocery parking lot. Updates regarding the setup of shower and bathroom facilities will be provided as those details become available

Volunteers- Anyone wishing to volunteer, including businesses offering heavy equipment and operators, please meet at the Town Center located at 6 South Main Street at 9:15am each morning.

Urban Search and Rescue- We have three USAR teams that continue to operate throughout the county with their searches of homes and debris piles.